



## Promoting Children's Mental Health and Self-Esteem Policy

Whitsers recognises that staff in the pre-school can have a major part to play in promoting children's mental health and effectively, with the staff's experience and knowledge intervene to support those children experiencing difficulties. The staff are tuned in to each individual child and their needs.

It is our continuing aim to:

- Make all the children and their families feel valued.
- Ensure that all the children feel included all the time.
- Enable the children to share their experiences with each other and with staff.
- Display a range of positive images and objects which reveal people in non-stereotypical roles.
- Celebrate diversity within the pre-school and to use resources that reflect diversity – including books, dolls and role-play.
- Help children to appreciate and value each other.
- We ensure that we support parents during the settling in period and separating from their child.
- To ensure at all times the child's feelings are valued.
- We will aim to help develop the child's empathy from positive role models.
- We will listen and model positive behavior.
- We will encourage children to listen to one another and provide opportunities to develop skills of empathy to help build positive relationships.

To achieve this staff:

- Work together at all times and offer support to each other.
- Never talk derogatorily about a member of staff to anyone behind that person's back.
- Sort out problems promptly so that they are not allowed to fester including staff supervisions.
- Treat other staff in the manner in which they themselves would like to be treated.
- Shouting is prohibited.
- Show all children equal care and attention.
- Ensure that all children in their care receive sensitivity and support.
- Ensure that no child is singled out for special attention or lack of it.
- Ensure that they do not discuss a child's appearance, development, behaviour or the feelings of the staff in a negative manner in front of that child or other children.
- Ensure there is a low staff turnover so that children are cared for by the same individual and given two key workers if felt necessary.
- Staff have relevant training and experience in mental health and managing positive behaviour.
- We ensure that our staff ratios are kept at a minimum of 1:8 for over 3 years, and 1:3

Document Name

Revision Number

Revision

Mental Health Policy

Date

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Mental Health Policy

21/05/2017

Reviewed – no changes

01/09/2019



for under 3 years.

### **The Role of the Key Worker**

At Whitsers a key person is the specific person who provides consistent care and emotional support to individual children allocated at the start of their time at our setting. In practice a key worker makes a child feel secure through ensuring the child feels safe within its physical and emotional environment. The key worker helps children feel they belong by introducing them to the routines which exist in the pre-school and everything that is associated with starting and finishing the day. It is important that the key worker helps children to recognise and articulate their feelings. For instance, the key worker can help children learn strategies to calm down. This can be undertaken for example through simple distraction techniques using a "calming down" box, looking at items from their familiar chatterbag, changing the scene, suggesting they go outside or inside etc.

At all times staff can help advance children's empathy through developing strong relationships with them and with their parents. At Whitsers we have implemented a new 'All About Me' form with a section for parents to fill in about how they are feeling and they are able to express any worries or anxieties about their child's time at pre-school. We appreciate that sometimes parents may feel anxious about separating from their child for the first time and we will be able to support them with this.

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